DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 122 354 95 EA 008 083

AUTHOR Johnson, Rudolph; Stromquist, Nelly P.
TITLE Participatory Educational Planning: Report of a Field Experiment.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Apr 76
NOTE 45p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, California, April 19-23, 1976)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Advisory Committees; *Cooperative Planning; *Educational Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; Objectives; *Organization; *Parent Participation; Policy Formation; Problem Solving; Program Descriptions; School Community Cooperation; Student Participation; Teacher Participation
IDENTIFIERS California (Palo Alto); *Collateral Organizations; Palo Alto Unified School District

ABSTRACT

This paper is a partial report on a three-year field experiment in participatory educational planning in a suburban school district. It is shown that teachers, administrators, parents, and students, working voluntarily with technical support as a "collateral organization" within a district, can substantially broaden the scope of educational study and planning available to the board and staff for shaping educational improvement. Full reports on this project are in preparation under a grant from the National Institute of Education. The paper briefly summarizes the history of the project and the methods used in the study. Three topics are then treated in some detail: participatory planning with unrestricted participation; the use of open and flexible problem definition in a planning process so that all problems or topics within the school system are open for consideration; and the use of the "collateral organization" strategy as a specific model for planning. (Author)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED122354

28.04

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

PARTICIPATORY EDUCATIONAL PLANNING: REPORT OF A FIELD EXPERIMENT

Rudolph Johnson and Nelly P. Stromquist
Palo Alto Unified School District
Palo Alto, California

Paper presented at the AERA Annual Meeting,
San Francisco, California, April 19-23, 1976

Research reported in this paper is supported by the National Institute of Education Grant No. NE6-00-3-0178. Opinions expressed in this paper are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the viewpoint of the National Institute of Education. Detailed research reports, including material not included in this paper, will be available from the Palo Alto Unified School District upon completion of the Project.

EA 008 083

INTRODUCTION

This is a partial report from a study of a field experiment which tested a new model for district-wide educational planning, using participatory techniques.

Two terms in this introductory sentence require definition. One is "planning"; the other is "participatory techniques". Let us begin with a discussion of the term "planning".

Most school districts, unlike cities, do not have planning departments. At the same time, many activities which may be labeled "planning" take place within school systems. For example, someone is responsible for projecting enrollments and those data must be used to plan for the appropriate numbers of teachers, rooms, and buses. At the same time, some person or group is preparing the budget at the central office level. Frequently, new programs are being planned, perhaps in special education or vocational education. At the heart of the educational process, all teachers plan courses and lessons.

It may not be useful to group all of this activity together under the label of "planning". Some of it might simply be labeled "administration". Other parts might be termed "problem-solving". Some of the activities are quite routine; they are repeated on a regular cycle, using familiar procedures, with little intent to make substantive changes, but rather to maintain the system in good working order by carefully examining its working parts and making adjustments when necessary. Other activities of a planning nature are totally non-routine. For example, schools must be built or closed, or a new program in human relations is to be developed, or two school districts are to be merged.

Planning is a non-precise term. Frequently, the term connotes highly rational activities, value-free in nature, performed by professionals, and aimed at exercising some control over the future. Usually, the sub-activities

include the gathering of data, considering alternative solutions, and recommending or choosing solutions which are optional in terms of established criteria.

Not infrequently, school districts compile a large amount of data and future projections into a document called a "long-range plan". Some investigators have found that these plans serve a number of purposes other than guiding the course of the institution into the future. Plans may serve as symbols, advertisements, games, or exercises for interaction (Cohen and March, 1974). Some skepticism does exist about the value and purposes of long-range plans. Nevertheless, such plans are developed.

In this paper, we are concerned with a process that has led to the development of a long-range plan within a school district. This process has been unusual in that within it the school district has dealt with broad-ranging issues, such as teacher-student relationships, competency-based education, and numerous other matters seldom taken up in the context of a long-range plan.

When planning probes below the surface of things and raises fundamental issues or issues not normally dealt with, we may say that the organization is doing some "constitutional"planning. Constitutional planning may involve the examination of unexamined relationships. It may deal with questions of legitimacy. For example, should the school system attempt to educate parents as a means toward improving the educational process for children?

Such "constitutional" work is familiar in business. A manufacturing firm may be struggling to find a new market, or attempting to decide whether it would be legitimate, in terms of objectives and capabilities of the firm, to move into a new type of product or service. In the public sector, we see numerous example of such "constitutional-level" planning. For example, should the National Park Service permit public convention facilities to be developed in Yosemite National Park, or is that illegitimate in terms of the goals of that agency and/or of the agency's capabilities?

Constitutional planning in education is rather unusual at the level of local school districts. By complex social processes, it becomes legitimate for school systems to educate five-year-olds, or to move into post-secondary education. For the most part, such movements are statewide or nationwide, usually controlled at the state level. Local districts respond, but do not themselves often probe such basic issues in a systematic way. There has been a substantial increase, however, in goal-setting and needs assessment exercises, which may raise fundamental issues.

The planning process to be discussed in this paper had as its intent such constitutional planning. The District chose to do this task by the use of an intensive participatory process.

Just as the term "planning" requires some clarification, so does the term "participatory". Mansbridge (1973) defines "participatory democracies" as those in which "decisions are made directly, face to face, by consensus, and with a presumption of equality among the members". Participatory methods in school systems will be defined here as those which bring parents and other citizens together with teachers and administrators into a small setting wherein they share viewpoints and design commonly-accepted proposals. Such methods have become widespread in the last decade, partly through the implementation of federal programs (such as ESEA, Title I) and state programs (such as Early Childhood Education, the forthcoming 7-12 grade educational reform programs in California, and competency-based education in Oregon), which mandate parental and staff participation in the design and evaluation of various educational programs.

Along with the rise in the use of participatory practices, there has been an increase in the variety of arrangements that are used in the attempt to include "parental" and "staff" involvement in educational policies and decisions. The broad guidelines of the various federal and state programs mandating parental and staff participation have led to the adoption of various formulas for

representation, areas of decision-making, finality of the decisions made by these parent/staff groups, and so on. In general, however, these programs have centered on immediate concerns, usually one academic year, and have been limited to one segment of the school system (e.g., grades K-3, competency-based education, language arts).

This study reports on the utilization of participatory methods for the purposes of long-range planning. The case we will be describing utilized committees that have some resemblance to existing "district advisory committees". Unlike these, however, the planning committees in the Project were coordinated under a "collateral organization" structure and were not limited to dealing with a specific area of the school district. The planning committees in the study also resembled "goal-setting" groups, but unlike these, they did not simply state goals but formulated proposals specific enough to be implemented. A third difference between the planning teams and the usual forms of policy-level participation was that participation was quite unrestricted, since anybody wishing to become a "volunteer planner" could do so. Finally, planning teams were provided technical consultation when they needed it in order to conduct surveys or to do other work necessary to their purposes.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS PAPER

The Palo Alto District set out to conduct a comprehensive planning process, participatory in nature, with no limitation on subjects which could be taken up for planning purposes. In so doing, a number of things were done which are unusual and deserve careful study as field-tested methods which may be useful in other districts. We will discuss three of them.

This paper assesses the benefits and disadvantages of three planning techniques:

1. Bringing volunteers from among all major sets of actors in the school system (parents, students, teachers, administrators) directly into the technical process of planning and policy formation;

2. Allowing a flexible problem definition, whereby participants in planning are given ample freedom to select areas for study and planning, subject to a minimum of restraint by school authorities; and

3. Establishing an organizational structure for planning purposes which parallels the District's administrative structure in some respects but remains separated from the line administrative structure and permits teachers and administrators to join with parents and students in educational study and planning in a manner which cuts across existing school structures and functions.

Each of these planning techniques is traced over a three-year period, from inception to the presentation of the planning proposals to the Board of Education.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EXPERIMENT

The Participatory Planning Experiment: The Case of Project Redesign

The Palo Alto Unified School District is a suburban K-12 district comprising 13,000 students, 20 elementary schools, and 6 secondary schools. In 1967, the Superintendent initiated efforts to involve the entire school/community in an examination and redesign of the educational system, "to meet the needs of students growing up in the uncertain, fast-changing, complex world of the 1970's and the early 1980's".(1) The school board enthusiastically approved the Superintendent's proposal and appointed a committee of 31 persons to create a structure by which the school district could proceed to produce a long-range plan. This group, labeled the "Convening Committee", was composed of citizens, staff, and students.

---

(1) "Project 1970's - 1980's: An Educational System Redesign", Superintendent's memo to the Palo Alto Unified School District Board of Education. October 15, 1971.

The structure formulated by this committee was endorsed by the Board, and Project Redesign was thereby born in January, 1973. It was to be composed of volunteers from all segments of the school district. A small paid staff would carry out technical and secretarial tasks for the volunteer planners. The main product of the Project would be the delivery of a long-range plan by mid-1975.

Structurally, Project Redesign was to be coordinated by a small eleven-member group called the "Design Management Team" (DMT). The first task of the DMT was to be the organization of several task forces charged with carrying out studies of the school district to produce a data base for comprehensive planning. This was to be followed by the organization of planning teams charged with developing proposals, and ad-hoc groups, which would be "self-appointed or special interest groups", working on some issues for inclusion in the long-range plan.(2) During the life of the Project, seven task forces and eleven planning teams were in operation. One group of primary teachers at first emerged as an ad-hoc group but then requested that it be designated as a planning team in primary education.

The planning teams met bi-weekly for an average of nine months. They produced planning proposals in the form of "operational goals" for inclusion in the Project's long-range plan. The DMT's task later in its life became that of synthesizing all operational goals into a single document, which resulted in an 80-page long-range plan. The plan - which included 36 operational goals - was delivered to the Board in September of 1975. Action was taken on six operational goals in March of this year and it is expected that the Board and the Cabinet will respond to the remaining 30 goals in the spring and summer of 1976.

---

(2) "A Report to the Palo Alto Unified School District Board of Education". Prepared by the Convening Committee, January 23, 1973.

The findings reported herein were obtained by a variety of research tools. Approximately 120 active Project participants were observed and completed questionnaires. Planning team coordinators were interviewed on completion of their team's work. Board and Cabinet members were interviewed twice during the development of the Project. Minutes and other printed documents were examined. Additionally, one of the researchers acted as a participant observer, while the other was a non-participant observer from the beginning of the Project's life.

Study of the process and provision of technical assistance to the volunteer planners was made possible, in part, by a three-year grant from the National Institute of Education.

1. PLANNING WITH UNRESTRICTED PARTICIPATION

Certain forms of voluntary participation in schools are easily accessible to anyone interested. These include service as a classroom aide or tutor, helper or organizer of field trips, member of the PTA, and so on. Other forms of participation - particularly those dealing with policy formation - are more restricted. Not everyone can serve on the school board, on appointed advisory committees, or in leadership roles in the PTA. Involvement in policy-level activities is usually attained after a process of selection or election. Persons who do not have a history of educational involvement or who are not well known by others in their community are unlikely to become involved.

Some channels for policy-level participation are highly accessible, of course. These include addressing the Board of Education, writing letters to the local press, participating in school elections, and organizing or joining ad hoc committees or groups of parents interested in some aspects of the schools. Characteristically, these channels either promote participation in an adversary setting or else affect policy formation in a very indirect way.

In the case of Project Redesign, participation was quite unrestricted. The Project permitted very easy access into policy-level activities, since

involvement in the task forces and the planning teams of the Project was open to anyone. The Design Management Team - the Project's coordinating body - was the only instance of a low-accessibility group in the Project. Members of the DMT, as it was called, were appointed by the Board of Education.

Previous research has found that voluntary participation in school-related activities depends a great deal upon the socio-economic makeup of the community (Carter, 1960; Graham, 1963; Minar, 1966). This Project took place in a suburb which is characterized by a high percentage of residents in professional, technical, and managerial occupations. Participation in school affairs is relatively high. More than 4000 persons volunteer their services during a typical school year; most of these (about 82 percent) become involved in auxiliary activities.(3) About 370 persons are presently involved in District advisory committees (both those mandated by federal programs and those existing at the District level). In addition, attendance at Board meetings is constant, with an average audience of 60 persons per meeting. a figure relatively high for a medium-sized school district. The community has traditionally supported education by voting favorably for bond issues and revenue base increases, even when similar elections in neighboring districts were failing.

Given these pre-Project features of the school district, what did we learn from a Project which permitted unrestricted participation in policy-level work?

One hundred eleven persons participated in task forces. About 190 participated in planning teams. Total community/school participation in the Project, including those who served on the DMT, reached about three hundred fifty. Of these, about 12 percent had overlapping memberships within the Project. Thirty-seven percent of the participants were parents, 33 percent were teachers, 14 percent were staff members, and 16 percent were students.

---

(3) These data were obtained from participation records for the academic year, 1973-74. Similar trends were observed in the years 1974-75 and 1975-76.

While the community had a high proportion of college graduates among its adult population (40 percent), participants in the Project had an even higher proportion (75 percent). The largest occupational category was professional, and close to 82 percent of these were in education-related professions. The age of the participants clustered in the 30 to 50 range; there were almost no participants in the 20 to 30 year age range.

We found that the participants were persons with a stable interest in education, an interest that had been manifested in previous involvement in various other educational activities. Eighty percent of the participants had performed at least three actions concerning the school system in the past two years (from voting in a Board election to having spoken or written to the Board or to the Superintendent). Only a small minority of participants (9 percent) had not been involved before in educational activities. These were mostly older male professionals. Possibly they had seen existing channels in the District - particularly the PTA - as unsuitable for themselves. This point is extremely important because these persons were a new group of participants who provided strong leadership and expertise.

The Project attracted some of the critics of the District - people who had frequently expressed opinions and/or suggested recommendations for change and improvement of various educational policies and programs. However, these critics were more numerous in the early phase of the Project, when the Convening Committee was appointed. Overall, the participants in the task forces and planning teams were individuals who expressed moderate to high satisfaction with the school district. The Palo Alto District, although having a reputation for being one of the best in the nation, does have a small number of dissatisfied clients (parents and citizens). This can be inferred from the results of a community needs assessment survey (administered in two consecutive years), in which about 8 percent responded that they strongly disagreed with the assertion that "the PAUSD gives its citizens their money's worth". In contrast, only 2 percent of the Project's participants responded in this manner.

The rate of participation in the Project was constant. After the initial formation of a planning team, there was an immediate reduction in its membership, usually within the first three meetings. After that, membership was quite stable. Most of the work was carried out by a small core of active participants. Thus, while participation in planning did not attract a large number of participants, the small but committed groups that evolved made participatory planning feasible.

The Project's staff and the DMT sought to have heterogeneous planning teams. The goal was to include in each team individuals from the four main constituencies of the school system: parents, teachers, students, and administrators. It is very important to note that heterogeneity is not the same as representativeness. The members were from different groups but did not represent different groups. The concept is the same as heterogeneous groupings in classes. It was soon learned that the degree of heterogeneity of a planning team was directly related to the problem choices of the team. Problems of general interest, such as high school graduation requirements, teacher/learner relationships, and early adolescent education attracted a combination of parents, teachers, and school staff. In contrast, more specialized topics, such as long-range finance and special services, tended to attract mostly participants from one or two groups, either mostly parents or mostly members of the staff. It was found that attempts to increase the degree of heterogeneity of these teams after they had operated for some time usually failed. New participants generally found it difficult to join an ongoing team in which all members knew each other quite well already or felt that other teams members were very much ahead in terms of the work and research done so far.

The participants gave to the planning task a constant and reasonably high number of hours per week (an average of 3.8 hours), although parents and students showed significant variability in the time given to the task. The majority of the participants performed their volunteer planner role according to the

official expectations attached to it; the performance scores of the quality of participation for the four groups were quite similar.

In examining the level of participation of those who became stable participants in Project Redesign, we found certain organizational variables made a significant impact on the intensity of participation (defined as the number of hours devoted to the planning task) and the quality of participation (defined as the behavioral compliance with planning task guidelines). The heterogeneity of planning team membership was found to be strongly and positively related to intensity of participation. Effects of group heterogeneity affecting intensity of participation, measured in beta weights, were .32 in the case of parents; .24 for students; and .30 for teachers. Group heterogeneity also had an effect on the quality of participation. Beta weights were .30 for students and .11 for teachers. No significant relationship appeared in the case of parents, and the beta weight for non-teaching staff members (mostly administrators) was negative (-.23).

The clarity with which the participants understood the task had a significant impact only in the case of the parents' intensity of participation (beta = .26) and quality of participation (beta = .16), while the feeling that key decision makers in the school system would respond favorably to the volunteer planners' proposals had significant effects on the quality of the parents' participation (beta = .18), staff members (beta = .35), and students (beta = .19). This feeling of perceived responsiveness on the part of key decision-makers, on the other hand, depressed the participants' intensity of participation, except in the case of students.

The organizational variables accounted for a greater variance in the intensity than in the quality of participation. Likewise, they showed more consistent and larger effects in the case of parents and students than among teachers and staff members. The organizational variables we examined implied the existence of a very rational structure motivating the individuals' participation. Yet our findings reveal that neither the clarity of the task nor the perceived

responsiveness to the planning proposals produced unambiguous effects. This suggests that other variables, perhaps those related to one's conception of duty and status, may also be affecting participation. The finding of negative organizational effects in the case of teachers and staff members indicates that clients of the schools (parents and students) perceive opportunities to participate in a different light from those working for the schools (teachers and administrators). For instance, the negative effect of group heterogeneity upon the administrators' intensity and quality of participation suggests that it is threatening for administrators to treat educational issues with parents, students, and teachers.(4)

Despite their commitment to the task, the participants' main reward for participation was not the accomplishment of planning objectives but the interpersonal relationships made possible by the participatory process. Approximately 59 percent of the participants stated that they attached value to the planning team setting in which they could interact with other persons possessing a high interest in and knowledge of educational issues. Twenty-three percent made positive mention of the educational learning experiences afforded by the planning process. Only 15 percent said that accomplishing planning objectives had been the greatest source of reward from their participation.

This finding calls our attention to a very important fact. In normal school district operations, settings are very seldom provided for intensive, prolonged interaction on basic educational issues between individuals from across the system, individuals up and down the status ranks of the system, and individuals from inside and outside the system. Interaction on basic issues between such persons is usually cast in an adversary setting. Typically, warring factions confront the Board of Education in the heat of controversy over a curriculum or program proposal. In this Project, however, diverse individuals

---

(4) A full discussion of the effect of the organizational variables on the participants can be found in Nelly P. Stromquist, "Antecedent and Concurrent Conditions of Participation: The Case of Participatory Educational Planning", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1975.

interacted intensively in a collaborative mode on program and curriculum issues, and most found the experience very rewarding personally, apart from its direct value to the organization. The settings in which persons interact concerning education within educational organizations deserve very careful scrutiny.

As noted above, the participants were not people dissatisfied with the school district. Perhaps as a consequence, the participants did not become very strong advocates of their planning proposals. All of the planning teams completed their operational goals but there was no great interest in campaigning for their adoption by the school district. Conversely, individuals who wanted to advocate a specific issue or problem did not join Project Redesign. Instead, they operated independently by forming their own pressure groups. This was observed throughout the life of the Project. During the Project, there were two non-Project issues in the District which brought about heavy parent involvement in District affairs. One was the closure of elementary schools; the other, a proposal to merge the Palo Alto Unified School District with other school districts, including sections of East Palo Alto, which has a substantial minority population. Parents and citizens activated by these issues carried out their efforts independently and did not use Project Redesign as a channel to achieve their objectives.

Overall, the introduction of unrestricted participation in planning produced the following consequences:

Participation in planning appealed mostly to educated persons with a stable involvement in educational affairs. Most of those who became volunteer planners had given auxiliary services to the schools before and were well-known for their activism and leadership in school affairs. This was true of all groups of participants - parents, students, staff, and teachers. On the other hand, the planning task permitted incorporation of a small number of older professionals (mostly male) who had not previously been in contact with the District.

The number of those attracted to abstract issues, such as long-range planning, was small compared to the number who volunteered in auxiliary activities in the classroom or at the school level. Yet those who came tended to be highly committed and therefore the planning task could be effectively conducted. All teams fulfilled their duties, namely, they did produce operational goals for inclusion in the long-range plan. The one exception was a team which was disbanded after several meetings because no consensus could be reached on a program of activities.

Unrestricted participation did not result in representative participation. This is not a criticism. It is too often unthinkingly assumed that every volunteer group must be representative. The school system, in undertaking this kind of effort, may be thought of as seeking the best people to do a job, exactly as it does when seeking employees. Voluntary participation is a very self-selective process and individuals who do not see themselves as competent, knowledgeable, and skillful as other potential participants generally will choose not to become involved. If school administrators intend to incorporate others from the community among volunteer planners, special recruitment efforts must be undertaken, as well as special training and assistance programs within the planning process. This was done in this Project to a limited extent, in the case of students and some parents.

In terms of benefits for school administrators, the development of a method for unrestricted participation in planning caused the District to tap a pool of relatively under-utilized human resources in the community. The Project allowed administrators to discover and develop a core of competent and efficient individuals. During the life of the Project, the District successfully utilized Project volunteers in tasks outside the Project itself, including help in a tax-revenue election and in conducting a budget priorities survey.

2. UTILIZING FLEXIBLE PROBLEM DEFINITION IN PLANNING

The repertoire of existing planning models is large. Goldman and Moynihan (1974) have found that at least eight planning models are being utilized in

education, ranging from quantitative techniques, such as PPBS, to behavioral methods, such as organizational development, to simple projective techniques, such as the common yearly projection or status quo planning. These planning processes have in common the fact that they have usually been carried out by a cadre of "technical experts". The organization's clients and its line personnel have rarely engaged in district-wide planning.

Educational plans have tended to be "physical", in the sense that they have dealt with resources (usually personnel and buildings) needed to provide an appropriate educational environment, rather than with the process and products of the educational system. In consequence, the usefulness of planning as a change strategy has not been fully exploited.

Administrators who invest in planning must, of course, have in mind the type of output they desire from planning activities, and the degree to which they feel the need to control the output in advance. In this case, the expectation was for rather specific, well-researched proposals, without advance specifications of the subject matter. In other words, there was substantial openness to unexpected findings and proposals, only with the requirement that there be adequate evidence of need, feasibility, and support.

This is a change strategy which recognizes several crucial features of school systems in regard to change. It recognizes the extreme complexity of educational systems so that no central administration can understand all the needs and possibilities for change. It recognizes the disconnected or loosely-coupled nature of the system which makes it possible for change to occur in several ways at the same time without damaging the operation of other parts of the system. It recognizes the need for ownership of change to grow and develop internally, without imposition from above. Finally, it recognizes the crucial role of the community in school change processes.

Project Redesign departed from the standard planning practices by working on the assumption that a participatory planning activity is important because it allows persons other than "technical experts" into the planning process. These

persons bring their own "expertise" as teachers, administrators, parents, and students. They are provided additional expertise in the form of technical assistance, and they develop new expertise as they gain experience within the Project.

Project Redesign sought to have a very wide "scope". Anything within the school system could potentially be affected by the plan. The first set of planning teams were given complete liberty to define the problem areas with which they would deal. The second set of planning teams were assigned "planning charges" - some relatively broad concerns that should be examined within the long-range plan: long-range finance, special services in the District, administrative needs, teacher/learner relationships, and so on. This was done because, in the opinion of the DMT, certain broad areas were too important to risk omission, and because the task of problem definition within new teams was found to require an initial statement of the broad area within which the team would work.

The kind of planning process that emerged under the participatory planning model resembled a modified pattern of needs-assessment planning. The process revolved around identification of "what is" and "what should be" happening in the school district. Most planning models assume a rational mode of decision-making in which (a) problems are defined; (b) data on alternative solutions are obtained; (c) alternatives are compared against each other; and (d) the most satisfactory solution is finally chosen. In the case of Project Redesign, the progression by which the teams moved from defining a problem to offering some proposals or recommendations to solve it was not strictly linear. There were a great many feedback loops between problem choice and data-gathering before the actual shaping of the proposal was begun. Planning teams frequently said that they "uncovered" issues as they "went through the information" and "asked new questions as they became more knowledgeable".

Observation of the planning teams, as well as interviews with team coordinators, revealed three main stages in the planning process: the problem definition stage, the data-gathering stage, and the problem solution stage.

Whether a planning team had complete freedom to select its topic or was given a "charge", it spent a sizable amount of time (ranging from three to twelve meetings) trying to define its problem in such a way that all members of the team agreed on what they wanted to do and could do. Teams which had a "charge" spent a smaller amount of time defining their problem, but these teams had to go through a process of understanding the charge and shaping it to their perception of their needs and capabilities.

Most of the data-gathering activities of the planning teams were closely related to the problems chosen for examination. Very little use was made of voluminous data generated by earlier task forces. On the other hand, the planning teams carried out a great deal of research on their own. They frequently did extensive literature searches, visited other schools, and interviewed personnel in the school district. Five of the teams gathered data from the school/community by means of surveys. Approximately 2500 community and staff members participated indirectly in the shaping of planning proposals by responding to surveys. The process that took place within the planning teams illustrates the inadequacies of planning procedures or goal-setting exercises, in which there is little provision for deviation from a straight linear process. The teams needed to be able to learn from initial attempts at defining the problem and gathering data. They needed to go back to rethink the problem, to reexamine the data, and sometimes to look for new data. It was a free-wheeling process. The opportunity and the setting for this kind of process is not often provided in schools.

From the team coordinators' description of their planning activity, alternative solutions were seldom explored formally. In some cases, the proposed solutions "emerged" from the data-gathering itself. This was particularly the case when surveys of parents, students, and teachers were utilized. In other cases, the eventual redefinition of the problem led to the formulation of the proposal.

Questionnaire responses by individual team members closely resembled the judgment of the team coordinators about the degree of difficulty of various

planning activities. In both cases, the data-gathering process was seen as relatively easy, while the design of the proposals was considered very difficult. While only 5 percent of the participants responded that "obtaining the information and knowledge necessary to do the job" was very difficult, 37 percent responded that "moving from information and data-gathering to specific operational goals or proposals" was very difficult. About 34 percent stated that "moving from the planning charge into relevant work assignments" was very difficult. Teams and individual team members frequently plunged into data-gathering with great energy after the tough process of defining the problem and specifying the desired data was completed. Data-gathering can be seductive in its tendency to crowd out time for the more difficult tasks.

Whereas the official role of the DMT was coordinating the work of the planning teams, rather than initiating new proposals, this underwent a de facto change during the writing of the long-range plan. As a result of the freedom the planning teams had exercised in establishing planning problems, the DMT and the Project's staff - the two groups formally responsible for the quality of the plan - saw themselves compelled to establish a balance of topics. The DMT and the Project staff, who actually wrote the plan, set out to do a "synthesis" of the operational goals presented by the various planning teams, but soon found themselves "supplementing" these operational goals by adding concerns they personally had, concerns they had seen expressed in the various needs assessment surveys, and concerns they had heard from Board members. Consequently, although the plan itself was initially expected to come from the teams, the 36 operational goals in the long-range plan had the following origins, according to planning team coordinators and DMT chairmen:

TABLE I

Operational Goals Contributed to the Long-Range Plan by Planning Teams

Team	Direct Contribution	Indirect Contribution
Elementary Education	1	3
Primary Education	5	
Early Adolescent Education	3	
Secondary Education	1	2
School/Community Relations	1	2
Long-Range Finance	2	
Teacher/Learner Relationships	1	3
Curriculum	1	
Administrative Needs	2	
Special Educational Services	3	1
DMT	7	
Not recognized by a Team Coordinator	5	

As can be seen, of the 36 operational goals, the planning teams claimed direct or indirect authorship of 25; DMT leaders recognized 7 as having been originated in the DMT; and 5 could not be identified by the coordinators. The participatory processes, therefore, did not result in a purely participatory product. Part of this is explained by the common experience that as new groups work on the output of other groups, changes are invariably introduced. In the case of Project Redesign, 6 team coordinators were pleased with the job done by the DMT in fitting the operational goals into the long-range plan because "only minor changes" had been made, or because their proposals had been rendered "more specific". The other 4 coordinators, however, felt that some of the proposals had been deleted, "rendered more weak and less controversial", or "taken out of context". However, these coordinators did not express discomfort with the changes introduced by the DMT. They saw these modifications as part of the DMT's coordinating role.

Although the teams had ample freedom to define their charges and to propose solutions, the eventual operational goals were not, in general, highly

controversial. Eight of the 11 team coordinators thought their proposals "addressed the needs and concerns of teachers"; were "extensions of what we have been doing"; "echoed a need this community has been expressing for the last twenty years"; or "represent an improvement over the present situation". Two team leaders described their proposals as innovative because these were either "trying to make the educational system more responsive to changing needs", or "gave parents more rights in the schools and asked for individualized programs for special children". Only one team coordinator categorized his team proposals as controversial. In his opinion, the proposals were "causing the District to respond to State action", forcing the District to react to possible legal directives about educational finance.

The opinions of members of the Board of Education and the central administration regarding the proposals were not unlike those of the team coordinators. Both groups thought that the plan dealt with the most important issues in the District. Some of these persons mentioned omissions, including cost effectiveness approaches to education, teacher evaluation, cultural pluralism,(5) and education for the gifted. No subject was perceived as "missing" by more than one respondent in interviews with the central administration and the Board.

A number of central administrators expressed disappointment at not seeing more "controversial" and "innovative" proposals. Several stated that the proposals provided substantial support on one side of issues now before the District. The latter include development of alternative elementary school programs, changing from junior high schools to middle schools, and developing better coordination of career and vocational education. Most of the proposals were seen by most administrators as addressed to changes already under way in the District.

The fact that an open planning process did not produce more controversial or "innovative" proposals deserves comment. This was not a divisive process.

---

(5) Cultural pluralism was not dealt with largely because the District maintained a Department of Human Relations specifically charged with developmental work in that area.

It could have been, presumably, since this District has its share of controversy. The act of deliberately raising broad and deep educational issues in the context of a planning process with accompanying norms of research, data-gathering, and examination of needs and solutions, in lieu of raising such issues in adversary settings may have had the effect of making some of the issues less divisive. While many persons saw the proposals as not very controversial or innovative, the proposals do deal with substantial issues, some of which will bring about major changes in the system if implementation is successful. The planning process, as conducted in this Project, is an educational process for all concerned. Under conditions of generally positive attitudes toward the schools, this type of process may be a much more fruitful way to bring about changes and improvements than using standard existing school district mechanisms. Whether proposals generated in such a process would be more divisive under conditions of high distrust and disaffection from the system is not known. There are reasons to believe that even under these conditions, this process would produce useful and non-divisive results.

It may be apparent from this discussion that along with proposals for change, this Project facilitated another process, namely, that of improving and deepening ideas already current within the system or in the educational scene outside this particular District. This second process is also one that is not provided for very extensively in normal school district life. We may be doing some good things now which need to be better understood and given more depth and content through research and planning, in the minds of both staff and citizens. This may counterbalance the need for change in other areas and make that change easier.

It is difficult to provide a brief summary of the 36 operational goals contained in the long-range plan. If we use the typology developed by Stevens (1976), which establishes three different types of educational reform (those dealing with structure, product, and the process of the school system) [6], the operational

(6) Stevens considers structural reforms those dealing with basic organizational resources (dollars, teachers, building) that seek to increase the internal efficiency of the system; product reforms are those covering services and policies having direct impact on students (e.g., programs for the gifted, compensatory education, work-study); and process reforms are those affecting educational decision-making.

goals can be classified as follows:

TABLE II

Number of Operational Goals Contained in the Long-Range Plan, by Type

Structure	16
Product	15
Process	5
	36

Stevens (ibid.) has noted that structure-related and product-related reforms are usually promoted by administrators and, hence, are more easily accomplished. As can be seen in Table II, most of the operational goals contained in the long-range plan dealt with either structure or product issues. Despite its participatory origins, then, the long-range plan seemed to follow the usual pattern of most in-house-designed reforms.

From the use of a method featuring flexible problem definition, several lessons have been learned. The choice by the group itself to deal with what they consider important may account in part for the great amount of time, commitment, and effort devoted by participants to the planning task. However, because of the isolated interest that tends to develop in each team, there is a tendency at the project level to end up with disjointed proposals. Perhaps when open participatory methods are used, the expected result should be less a set of highly-integrated proposals which form a tightly-knit plan, and more a set of recommendations on issues or problems which are found to be important and solvable by methods proposed.

The planning style that emerges from participatory planning teams is not characterized by formal examination of alternative solutions. Solutions tend to be those which receive the consensus of planning team members, after numerous

trial-and-error attempts with other alternatives. This propensity to make decisions by "satisfying" instead of optimizing has been noted elsewhere (March and Simon, 1958). Simply stated, solutions which are proposed are regarded as satisfactory solutions, but sufficient analytical rigor is not applied to state that these are optimal solutions, better than all others.

A flexible problem definition may also lead to the exclusion of certain issues or problems which do not fall within the areas of concern of the volunteer planners. This leads to a change in the "coordinating" role of the group at the top, since it is put in the position of coming up with a reasonably comprehensive plan. A flexible problem definition also places a burden on the Project's salaried staff. Since these are persons formally responsible in the organization, they see themselves forced to include proposals the planning teams did not design but that should be there, according to the problems they have perceived while dealing with the organization.

In spite of these problems, the basic concept of setting up a planning process with open problem definition in a broad participatory setting is feasible. It requires an openness on the part of school officials to proposals they did not originate, coming from within the teaching and administrative ranks, as well as from among parents and students. These proposals are allowed to develop and mature in a collaborative atmosphere, rather than being put forward in adversary settings by special interest groups.

3. A PARALLEL ORGANIZATION STRATEGY

The Project was set up so that the Design Management Team (DMT) would coordinate the work of the planning teams. To assure that the Project would have independence within the organization, it was decided that the DMT would report directly to the Board of Education. The Project director, on the other hand, was made a member of the superintendent's cabinet, the top administrative council of the District, and reported to the superintendent.

This structure resulted in the creation of a new organization within the school district which in some ways paralleled the regular District structure. There was a hierarchy of teams and reporting relationships and a broad division of labor to encompass widely-differing educational and organizational concerns. This special organization was to deal with ill-defined problems and issues centering around the future of the school district. It would not get involved with daily operational responsibilities and problems, but would, nevertheless, have the freedom to examine any issue concerning present operations. People in this new organization would come from a variety of roles in the regular organization but here they would assume new roles and would work as equals, regardless of position in the formal organization. The creation of a parallel organization in this manner is not unlike the organizational change strategy labeled the "collateral organization" developed by Zand (1974).(7) This strategy has been tested in industrial and commercial settings. In the words of Zand:

> Typically, a group (in an organization) has a chain of command and a division of responsibilities designed primarily for coping with well-defined, repetitive problems. Continued change in consumers' desires, competitors' tactics, and product technology introduce unforeseen, ill-defined problems and opportunities. The hierarchical organizational structure is not designed to discover and solve these "ill-structured" problems. Managers, regardless of organizational level, therefore, need collateral modes.

We believe that the hierarchical structure of schools, as well as that of commercial organizations studied by Zand, is "designed primarily for coping with well-defined, repetitive problems, and not very adaptable to dealing with ill-defined problems and opportunities". Rigid bureaucratic structures

---

(7) Concepts borrowed from Zand are used extensively in this section. The reference is to Dale Zand, "Collateral Organization: A New Change Strategy", Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 63-89.

have been shown to present problems when the organization must deal with uncertain, ambiguous environments (Burns and Stalker, 1961). Many will agree that school systems do face such environments at the present time. The particular characteristics of school bureaucracies which inhibit innovation have been examined by many persons. A good discussion of this is provided by Abbott (1969). School managers are not more inclined than other managers to encourage the development of proposals and ideas which are "unsanctioned and unpredictable", in the words of Zand.

School officials can utilize differing organizational structures for different purposes, if they have the desire to do so. Zand asserts that a manager who uses only one organizational structure for all problems is like a carpenter who only knows how to use a hammer. Structures can be rearranged and temporary structures assembled and disbanded, to deal with differing needs and problems. Sarason (1971) comments that, in the case of principals, there is a tendency to stay near the lower margins of what may be done, basing such lack of flexibility on conceptions of what the system will tolerate or what will work which have not been tested. What are needed are concepts explaining and legitimizing departures from standard structures, and legitimizing relationships and flows of information and ideas outside the usual channels. This does not mean an undermining of the manager's position. On the contrary, there is ample evidence that if such planning and decision-making structures enhance the influence of parents, students, teachers, and lower-level administrators, this need not be at the cost of influence and authority on the part of top administrators. These persons may well find their own influence strengthened, along with everyone else in the system (Tannenbaum, 1968; Johnson, 1975). Skills and knowledge may be brought into the planning process which are present in the school system and the community but are not utilized by normal administrative procedures. Attention and energy may be focused on these ill-defined problems which otherwise do not happen because of the press of other issues. Norms which

exist within the organization which make it very hard for new ideas to get a fair hearing may be overcome. Work may proceed on difficult problems in a collaborative setting instead of the commonplace adversary setting in which a special interest group presents its demands.

In the planning process, we are examining a "collateral organization" set up on a temporary basis, which did provide for new approaches to planning and problem-solving. It showed both merits and problems, which are discussed below.

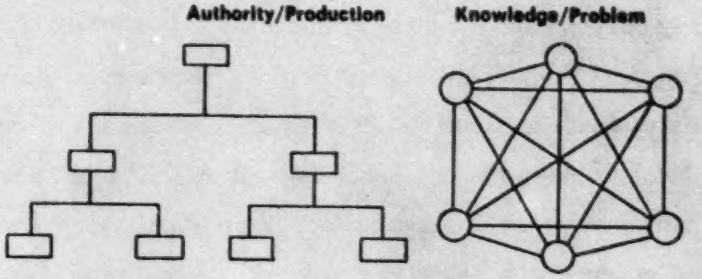
The collateral organization strategy for planning assumes a rational mode of decision-making. This does not mean that the organization is expected to base its decisions on perfect knowledge and unambiguous ranking of priorities, but rather that the decisions will be based on data and that the organization will proceed to implement the necessary changes, once certain problems are identified and adequate solutions posed.

The creation of a collateral organization is intended to facilitate a new mode of behavior within the school system. It does not attempt to replace the usual roles, relationships, and ways of behaving, but to supplement them with new behavior patterns for persons while those persons are working within the collateral organization. This assumes that persons are capable of different kinds of behavior within the organization at different times and places.

Zand argues that an organization may operate too exclusively in what he calls the "authority/production mode". The collateral organization may provide the opportunity to operate for certain purposes in the "knowledge/problem" mode. The contrast between these modes is described by Zand, as follows: (ibid., p. 68.)

Figure I

Contrast between Two Organizational Modes



Elements	Authority/Production	Knowledge/Problem
1. *Levels of authority*	Many	Few
2. *Division of labor*	High	Low
3. *Links to others in the organization*	Few	Many
4. *Source of influence and power*	Position in the hierarchy	Ability to identify and solve the problem
5. *Use of rules and procedures*	High	Low
6. *Primary purpose*	Maximize output	Analyze or invent knowledge to solve problems

We will now describe ways in which Project Redesign serves to illustrate the collateral organization mode of planning and problem-solving, then discuss some of the ways in which school systems present problems when this mode is employed.

Project Redesign did succeed in setting up a working collateral organization. An elaborate structure came into being and operated parallel to the regular organizational structure. The members of this parallel organization came from a wide range of positions within the school district and community.

In the Zand industrial model, all members of the parallel organization are from the regular organizational structure. In this school version, members were drawn from the community and the student body as well. Community volunteers and students were in effect accorded a special membership in the organization as participants in this Project.

Within the planning teams which made up the core of the parallel organization, group norms of peer equality were quickly established. Some administrators and some teachers grumbled about having to explain "professional" matters to lay persons and students in the early stages of the work.[8] Each team went through a "shakedown" period during which several persons dropped out. After this settling-down phase, peer equality among the working team that remained became the norm. For example, it was standard practice for team members to call each other by first names, even when students were addressing principals. The level of interaction was high. Students did show a lesser propensity to initiate discussion than adults.

Considerable pains were taken to establish norms of planning behavior within the planning teams, and to a large extent this effort was successful, judging by responses to questionnaires and by observations. These norms included the importance of being in touch with the community about issues under consideration; gathering the best available data to apply to problems; keeping the needs of students most clearly in mind; and working toward specific proposals. The norms called for openness to diverse points of view and stressed rational comparisons and data-gathering, rather than relying upon one's own opinions and biases. Enormous energy was invested in data-gathering. New norms developed within teams in which supportive, positive comments and suggestions were made when new ideas were proposed, in contrast to a common organizational norm in which new proposals are met with immediate criticism before the idea is fully enough developed to withstand such criticism. In other words, a norm of cooperation and collaboration developed, rather than norms of competition and criticism, within

---

(8) It has been suggested by others experienced in participatory planning that interaction between professionals and non-professionals is most successful when the non-professionals are generally regarded as more competent than the professionals by the professionals themselves. Such extra competence can be deliberately developed and pains can be taken to make sure the professionals perceive the special competencies of the non-professionals. For example, students have special competence at perceiving the student viewpoint.

this particular working relationship, for most of the planning teams.

The teams were asked to come up with specific proposals that would become input to the policy formation process at the top of the organization. This was made very specific by the use of the term "operational goals", defined as descriptions of desirable future states of affairs possible within a time span of two to five years.(9) Teams were asked to produce such goals, and did so without exception.

According to Zand, a collateral organization is distinguishable from and linked to the formal organization in the following ways:

a. The parallel organization is set up to identify and solve problems not solved by the formal organization. Within the context of a school district, it seems that the parallel organization is more successful at identifying problems than at solving them. As noted, the parallel organization does not supplant the authority of the formal organization, which continues to hold responsibility for all decisions.

The Project made a contribution insofar as it addressed many problems not otherwise considered by the school district. As examples, a study of overall curriculum policy formation within the District resulted in a proposal for a curriculum commission, and the study of general problems in secondary education led to a proposal for competency-based education. These are not new ideas but they are new to this District. By means of this process, substantial amounts of information and discussion concerning these issues has ensued throughout the District.

As the work progressed, the Project became the setting in which individuals pursued their own interests in a way which would not have happened outside this Project. For example, a group of middle school teachers examined alternative schools in surrounding communities and wrote a report about them which was

(9) This definition is from James M. Hardy, Corporate Planning for Nonprofit Organizations. New York: Association Press, 1972.

widely circulated; and a citizen made a study of the changing picture in college admissions which was extensively used. A study of certain aspects of the relationship between teachers and students was carried out by a group of parents, teachers, and students, and became the basis for faculty workshops, as well as being used in several classes for discussion purposes.

b. The new organization allows new combinations of people, new channels of communication, and new ways of selling old ideas.

Without any question, this was achieved in Project Redesign. People were brought together in new combinations across schools, status levels, and communities. Old information channels were bypassed. Interviews were conducted, files were examined, and surveys were carried out without seeking approval through normal administrative channels. The Project Redesign staff advised on technical and organizational matters in order to avoid problems of inadequate or improper survey instruments or unnecessary intrusions, or in order to negotiate permission to obtain information if questions were raised. No problems were experienced in obtaining information desired by the teams. Information from outside the system was also sought in great quantities. Telephone calls were made, the ERIC system was used, letters were sent out, and numerous visits were made to other institutions. Information flowed freely from the teams, as well as to the teams. Numerous reports and papers were developed by individuals and teams and these were freely printed and distributed within the system, without waiting for official approval. Some of these reports were widely used as materials for workshops and discussions throughout the District.

Communication was very open among the members of the teams, as well as between the individual teams and the system. Team members took much pleasure in the free-wheeling interaction about educational problems within teams. This interaction, as stated earlier, was considered by the participants to be one of the major rewards for participation. This suggests that the

collateral organization format in schools meets the need to have a setting within schools in which teachers, administrators, parents, and students can engage in purposeful, searching discussions of educational issues on a sustained basis. The standard school structure makes no provision for such interaction.

c. Both the regular organization and the collateral organization are available to managers to use, depending upon the problem. During the existence of Project Redesign, the District administration became aware of the resources - the expertise and the people - made available by the Project. The administration, through the superintendent, chose when to utilize these resources and when not to use them. In the cases where the administration used the Project's resources, such as in carrying out a successful tax revenue campaign, administering a budget priorities survey in the community, or involving parents and citizens in public hearings about elementary school closings, such resources were specific individuals with specific skills or reputations.

The school administration did not use the resources of Project Redesign in a manner that could be identified as contributing to administrative decisions. Five planning teams presented interim reports to the board and the superintendent. These reports were generally received with praise, but they did not evoke any written reply or comment. On the other hand, the superintendent asserted that he had read the reports, used them in Cabinet meetings, and had found the input "valuable and useful".

d. The collateral organization consists of the same people who work in the formal organization. There are no new people. This feature of the collateral organization as described by Zand is complex in the case of schools. In one sense, as we have noted earlier, there were few "new" participants, since most people who became involved had been active in educational matters before. In the same sense, students are not "new" participants. Many of these people are new participants in policy-level activities, however. For many, it was a

role that placed them for the first time in close working relationships with people in the central district administration. Moreover, some wholly new people did become involved. For the most part, Project Redesign put people together in new roles and new combinations who already had some close relationship with the organization, not unlike the Zand industrial model, except in the wider diversity of organizational roles and relationships.

From the above discussion, it is apparent that in many respects, Project Redesign does illustrate the collateral organization mode of planning and problem-solving. There are, however, more problematic issues than those just discussed. These include the interface between the formal organization and the parallel organization, the basic issue of community involvement in this mode of planning, and the utilization of the output of the planning process by the school system.

Project Redesign operated as a large, complex parallel organization. It would be possible to utilize the concept of the collateral organization with a small group around the chief administrative officers of the school system. In this case, however, we are examining an ambitious, large-scale, broad-ranging enterprise. It proved difficult to maintain close interaction between the Project and the school district governing board and administration.

Project Redesign was an agenda item at 16 (14 percent) of the 90 Board of Education meetings held during the period from the inception of the Project to the time the board formally received the plan. In addition, three special study sessions were held concerning the Project. Substantial time was devoted to the selection of appointees to the initial "Convening Committee" and the Design Management Team. Once the planning process was under way, involvement of the board was limited. At first, quarterly reports were to be provided, but after three such reports, they were discontinued because they were time-consuming and did not elicit much interest from the board. Two annual management plans were presented, but few comments were fed back on this material. The Project

staff maintained personal contact with individual board members by means of lunches and informal briefings. In mid-Project, the board appointed one of its members to serve as a liaison with the Design Management Team, and this person subsequently attended all meetings of that group. Individual planning teams made special presentations on three occasions when their work applied directly to matters on the board agenda. However, in the over-all process, there was but limited engagement of the board in the planning process. This is not necessarily surprising, except that in this case, the Project was set up as a board project, with a direct reporting relationship to the board, rather than through the administration. The analogy of a city planning commission which reports directly to a city council was sometimes mentioned in explaining this relationship. From the administration's point of view, this reporting relationship resulted in the planning proposals' coming to the administration in a manner similar to those of an outside consulting agency or an outside study commission. The administration was not directly responsible for the study and the subsequent proposals. This provided certain advantages to the administration which, under these circumstances, was free to take an independent stand on the merits of the plans proposed.

The thought of setting up a planning process reporting directly to the board might appear risky to school superintendents. However, the process did not undermine the administration in any way, even though some Project reports were very critical of administrators. The Project staff reported to the superintendent personally and the superintendent was always in a position to intervene if he had desired to do so, although that did not happen.

District administration at the top levels also participated in the planning process only in limited ways. On several occasions, the superintendent appeared at Project Redesign meetings, sometimes to make formal statements of support or encouragement, and at other times just to join in when he happened to be in the building. He did not actively engage in the discussions.

The superintendent's administrative cabinet is a group of nine persons, including assistant superintendents and certain other administrators. This is the chief administrative decision-making body of the District. Excluding the director of Project Redesign, only three members of this group participated as members of Project Redesign teams or task forces, and these three participated for only brief periods. On occasion, one assistant superintendent asked the Project Redesign staff to meet with his staff to discuss developments within the Project. Top administrators were frequently asked for information or were interviewed in connection with planning team studies. Nevertheless, the engagement of this group in the planning process was limited. This was one outcome of structuring the process in a direct reporting relationship to the board of education.

This lack of engagement posed dilemmas to the planning participants and the staff. The norms of the Project called for open and collaborative consideration of ideas. Since the top administration did not share in those norms, proposals could not, or at least were not taken to this group in partially-completed form. The sense prevailed that the top administrators should not receive proposals until they were in finished form.

In other words, persons who participated in the collateral organization were asked to perform two roles - their regular organizational role and the temporary, special role of participatory planner. The top administrators were not asked to play two roles, retaining instead only the normal authority role. Given their position in the District, this fact is the strongest departure of Project Redesign from the collateral organization concept. Ideally, the superintendent's cabinet would have been engaged in the planning process by some means while proposals were still under development. This could have been accomplished by special workshops in which the cabinet members worked as temporary peers with the rest of the planning participants in a free investigation of data and alternatives.

The crucial moment in the interface between the collateral organization and the formal organization occurred when the long-range plan was submitted to

the board in September, 1975. Detailed information was provided in a long formal presentation. Board members rated each proposal as it was presented in terms of their willingness to act on it quickly or their desire to defer it for more discussion and information. Following the initial presentation to the board, the superintendent was asked to study the plan and to come back with the recommendations of his staff.

At that time, the District was going through a period of elementary school closures and there was a probability that the District might face a merger with several neighboring districts. The cabinet devoted four meetings to reviewing the plan, but found this process extremely difficult. It was decided to recommend action on some goals and to defer action on most of them. Chosen for immediate acceptance were goals which, according to stated criteria, were "consistent with actions already approved by the Board"; "were not likely to require increases in fiscal resources"; and "could be pursued within normal work assignments of staff".

The whole issue was tabled with the consent of the board until the school closure issue was resolved. That resolution was reached in February, 1976. In the same month, the board did formally adopt six Project Redesign goals and is scheduled to act on further subsets of the goals during the spring and summer of 1976, as both the superintendent's cabinet and the board have the opportunity to study them further.

Basic issues surrounding the interface between the planning project and the administration may be summarized as follows:

Participatory planning using the collateral organization concept calls for the temporary assumption of new roles by participants. This new role of planner makes it possible to have free exchange of ideas and information, and makes possible the development of ideas from tentative, unfinished form to tested proposals. If the top administrators of the organization do not share in this process with its accompanying norms, a serious dilemma is created. If the planners take tentative, unfinished ideas to the top administrators, these

persons may kill the ideas before they are fully developed. This is because the top administrators are operating in their usual organizational role with its norms which are very different from those within the special collateral organization. If plans are not taken to the top administrators, however, they have no ownership of the final products. As far as they are concerned, those products are the same as the work of an outside study commission or consulting firm, even though the work was done by persons from inside the organization and the community, and indeed, by many of their subordinate administrators. Pressures of time are always present which may be used, along with many other reasons, for not becoming involved with the proposals, either during or after the planning process.

In the case of Project Redesign, a strong commitment has been made by the superintendent and his top administrative staff to follow through with consideration of the long-range plan in cooperation with the board of education. This, of course, is crucial to any evaluation of Project Redesign.

One of Zand's criteria for a collateral organization is that the outputs of the collateral organization become inputs to the formal organization.

As the preceding discussion shows, at the central policy level, this exchange is happening, although with some difficulty. It is very important to add, however, that outputs of Project Redesign became inputs to the school system at many levels other than at the top; and even at the top, output of the Project has been used in many ways other than for official decisions on Project Redesign goals.

There are several instances of this. Work conducted in Project Redesign in the area of early adolescent education became basic study material for pre-school in-service teacher workshops, and for the work of school level committees developing plans for major program shifts in the junior high schools. The concept of the "middle school", while not new in education, was new to this District prior to Project Redesign. At present, the old junior high schools are changed to develop "middle school" programs and the term "junior high school" has been dropped.

A study of teacher-learner relationships conducted by a Project Redesign planning team was used for in-service training in two secondary schools. The concept of the alternative elementary school has been deepened and clarified by the elaborate work of a Project Redesign team working in that area, and many requests are received for the output of this team. The District has adopted an official policy permitting the development of officially-designated alternative elementary schools. Sections of Project Redesign studies regularly turn up in proposals and plans by schools and groups around the District. Board members quote these materials and a number of teachers have used them in classrooms. A total of more than 30 reports and studies were completed by Project Redesign teams, in addition to the long-range plan itself. The Project operated as a kind of free press within the system.

The full effect of this activity is elusive and difficult to analyze. In some cases, it probably spurred activity which might otherwise not have happened. The full account of the use of the output of the collateral organization (Project Redesign) by the formal organization (the District) must await developments over the next six months.

A final issue of Project Redesign as a collateral organization is the involvement of the community within the Project. The collateral organization model is not a community involvement model. It is a problem-solving technique within organizations with potential uses, particularly with major, ill-defined, long-range problems for which broader expertise, free information flow, and careful nurturing of possible solutions are needed. Schools, however, are intimately bound up with the communities they serve. To address such "constitutional" issues without involvement of the client community is probably unwise. (For an excellent theoretical discussion of the relationship between schools and communities which is highly relevant to this discussion, see John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, "Notes on the Structure of Educational Organizations: Revised Version".) Nevertheless, the collateral organization perspective does not necessarily call for formal community representation by a delegate system, nor wholesale community involvement.

The purpose is to find solutions to problems, and bringing in the community is done to accomplish that purpose, not to build a political base for decision-making or for other reasons. Those reasons are important from other points of view, but from the collateral organization standpoint specifically, the collateral organization should be set up with the best persons available to work on problems.

Participants in Project Redesign, self-selected through an open voluntary process, did bring a great variety of skills and expertise into the Project. It is doubtful that the same persons would have been present if a system of election or appointment had been used.

An appointive system might have produced even greater expertise. However, this unusual open system produced a group of persons who fit the needs of the collateral organization very well. They were willing to address themselves to the difficult task of planning. They were not responsible to specific constituencies which would control their work in the Project. They took very seriously the need to be in touch with the broader community in the course of the work.

The broader community did not express much interest in the planning process while it was in progress. Attempts were made to keep the community informed. Open houses were held at intervals in the Project offices but they attracted only about 10 visitors each day. A needs assessment survey of the community in mid-Project (March, 1975) shows that 48 percent of the respondents thought they knew "some" or "a great deal" about the Project. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents believed that the Project had had "positive" or "very positive" effects on the District, but 49 percent had no opinion. When the plan was presented to the Board of Education, approximately 110 persons were in attendance. Later, two public hearings were held on the plan, with very low attendance (20 persons and 5 persons). Written responses by the general public to the plan totaled about thirty-five. The written responses included formal statements (generally supportive) from the League of Women Voters and two local educational groups. The teacher organizations responded only

to portions of the plan in a limited manner. This is further evidence of the non-controversial, non-divisive outcomes of the process. It also illustrates the fact that the collateral organization concept is feasible, even given the need to involve the community. School administrators have greater flexibility in types of community involvement than is usually utilized through standard advisory committees and other devices.

It must be pointed out that Project Redesign was not designed with the concept of the collateral organization in mind. Instead, as the Project developed, it took on features which make it possible to examine the Project as an example of the use of the collateral organization for planning purposes in schools.

In many respects Project Redesign did operate as a collateral organization. In the uncertain world of participatory processes and planning processes in schools, there is no surplus of workable concepts. To the extent to which Project Redesign did operate as a collateral organization, we are encouraged about the usefulness of this type of temporary organization for planning purposes, with broad participation, new norms, and new roles. The fuller application of the concept in a manner which would involve the superintendent and his immediate staff in the process must await another field trial in another district.

A collateral organization does not need to be as elaborate and time-consuming as it was in this case. The concept is an advance over the more passive advisory committee so popular in schools. Advisory committees are believed to operate, for the most part, under different norms and expectations than those intended for a collateral organization.

SUMMARIZING COMMENTS

This paper has examined certain aspects of this field experiment in participatory educational planning. Some general summary comments may now be made:

Clearly, some of the greatest benefits of the Project to the school district derived from having community and staff members participate in the task

of planning. The process of the Project was very useful to participants and to the District. The degree of satisfaction among the volunteer planners was high. Their satisfaction was not as clearly related to the design of planning proposals as to the learning and process experiences afforded by the planning teams. The District superintendent, top-level administrators, and board members were almost unanimous in expressing a great deal of pleasure with the number and the quality of participants. They felt that the Project had caused community members to understand the system better and, more importantly, that the Project had caused the District to identify a pool of competent and committed individuals. Many of them were pleased with the sustained level of participation that characterized the participatory planning process. The participatory process had positive results for the District. That is an important finding in its own right.

Insofar as the Project's major product is concerned (the long-range plan), administrators and board members alike were critical of its lack of articulation, its varying levels of specificity, and perceived limited originality. When asked to state which operational goals had made or would make an impact on the District's policy decisions, these persons were quick to point out that many of the suggested changes were already being implemented or would have been scheduled to take place even in the absence of Project Redesign. Some subsequent decisions of the board that bore a close relationship to operational goals in the long-range plan, such as creation of a Department of Research and Evaluation, were not attributed by some to the long-range plan, but to ongoing administrative changes.

Difficulties were experienced in establishing a successful interface between long-range planning and day-to-day problem-solving. Formal liaison agents between the planning operation and the formal organization may be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for successful interaction.

Some outcomes of the Project which were not necessarily planned were generally beneficial. Early reports developed by data-gathering task forces did not make a significant impact on the planning process. One group cannot successfully develop data which will be used by another group without intensive collaboration between the groups. However, these early reports were widely read within

the school community and caused Project Redesign to be known as a place where useful and recent information could be obtained.

The operational goals that were finally proposed were judged by many not to be highly innovative or controversial. They provided substantial support to programs and directions that were undertaken by other means within the District, however. In some cases, it is quite difficult to decide whether the proposals supported administrative decisions or whether administrative decisions moved along to preclude being told what to do by a document that derived, to a large extent, from parents' and teachers' recommendations. An outside observer might find that the proposals are quite innovative and quite controversial, but after discussions within this District over a three-year period, resulting from Project Redesign, they seem quite ordinary to persons here. They strongly resemble proposals contained in the California proposals for reform of intermediate and secondary education statewide.

Some of the reports developed by the planning teams had a direct impact on some schools, administrators, and teachers in the District. In some cases, survey results and proposals in the long-range plan were used by principals and their staffs in shaping policies at the school level. In other cases, reports from the planning teams were used as the basis for in-service training activities.

The most important test of the effectiveness of the Project, from the point of view of being an exercise in long-range planning, will be whether the recommendations make a long-range measurable impact on the school district. At this point in our research, such an appraisal is not possible. All we can say is that there is a willingness on the part of the board to study ways to implement the recommendations and some participants have indicated that they will pressure board members into action.

REFERENCES

Abbott, Max G., "Hierarchical Impediments to Innovation in Educational Organizations", in Fred. D. Carver and Thomas J. Sergiovanni, Organization and Human Behavior. New York: McGraw-Hill 1969.

Burns, T.B., and G.M. Stalker, The Management of Innovation. London: Allyn and Bacon, 1971.

Carter, Richard F., Voters and Their Schools. Cooperative Report No. 308, Institute for Communications Research, Stanford University, July 30, 1960.

Cohen, Michael D. and James G. March, Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974.

Goldman, Samuel and William J. Moynihan, Developing a Conceptual Framework for Viewing Models of Educational Planning. Final Report to the National Center for Educational Research and Development, Washington, D.C., June 1974.

Graham, Grace, The Public Schools in the American Community. New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

Hardy, James M., Corporate Planning for Nonprofit Organizations. New York: Association Press, 1972.

Johnson, Rudolph, The Relationship between Teacher Collaboration and Decision-Making in Elementary Schools. Stanford, California: Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, 1976. Technical Report No. 48.

Mansbridge, Jane J., "Time, Emotion, and Inequality: Three Problems of Participatory Groups." Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Vol. 9, Nos. 2-3, 1973, pp. 351-368.

March, James D., and Herbert Simon, Organizations. New York: John Wiley, 1958.

Meyer, John W., and Brian Rowan, "Notes on the Structure of Educational Organizations: Revised Version." A paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, California, August 1975.

Minar, David, Educational Decision-Making in Suburban Communities, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1966.

Sarason, Seymour B., The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971.

Stevens, Leonard B., "The Paradox of School Reform." Phi Delta Kappan, February 1976, Vol. 57, No. 6, pp. 371-374.

Stromquist, Nelly P., "Antecedent and Concurrent Conditions of Participation: The Case of Participatory Planning." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1975.

Tannenbaum, Arnold S., Control in Organizations. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968.

Zand, Dale, "Collateral Organization: A New Change Strategy." Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1974, pp. 63-89.